

IN THE CLAIMS

Please CANCEL claim 4.

Please AMEND the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus, comprising:
a port configured to receive a write command frame having a header with an OX_ID or RX_ID and defining an initiating Host and a target;
a trapping mechanism configured to trap the write command frame ~~if the write command frame designates a predetermined Host_ID and a predetermined target_ID~~; and
a processor configured to process the trapped write command by ~~initializing either the~~ modifying the OX_ID or RX_ID of the write command header to include a value;
wherein the processor is further configured to initialize a receiver exchange identifier (RX_ID) of a transfer ready command with the value and send a the transfer ready command frame to the initiating Host before receiving the a transfer ready command from the target,
~~wherein the transfer ready command received from the target is suppressed.~~
2. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the ~~Switch~~ apparatus is an initiating Switch coupled to the Host in a first SAN.
3. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the processor of the initiating Switch is further configured to modify the write command frame before forwarding the write command to the target.
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 4, wherein the ~~initiating Switch~~ apparatus uses the ~~initialized RX_ID value~~ as a handle for accessing information pertaining to the write command session in a sessions ID table.
6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the processor of the initiating Switch is further configured to issue a Transfer Ready command to the Host.

7. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 5, wherein the ~~initiating Switch~~ apparatus is further configured to ~~initialize and~~ use the ~~initialized RX_ID~~ value as the RX_ID for all communication related to the write frame between the ~~initiating Switch~~ apparatus and the Host.

8. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 5, wherein the ~~initiating Switch~~ apparatus is further configured to ~~modify use the value as the OX_ID value with in all~~ communications between the ~~initiating Switch~~ apparatus and the target.

9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the initiating Switch is further configured to transfer additional data frames to the target when the initiating Switch receives a Transfer Ready command associated with the write command frame from the target.

10. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 30 4, wherein the Switch is a target Switch coupled to the target.

11. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the target Switch forwards the write command frame to the target.

12. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the target Switch forwards data frames associated with the write command frame to the target after receiving a Transfer Ready command from the target.

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the target Switch is further configured to buffer the data frames prior to receipt of the Transfer Ready command.

14. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the target Switch is further configured to maintain a sessions ID table and to use the OX_ID of the write command frame as an index to the session corresponding to the write command.

15. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the target Switch is further configured to modify the RX_ID value for all communication related to the write command frame between the target Switch and the Host.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the target Switch is further configured to modify the OX_ID value with communications between the target Switch and the target.

17. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the ~~Switch~~ apparatus is further configured to use the RX_ID value of trapped write commands to specify the amount of buffer space needed for the write command and use the write command frame to request the needed buffer space.

18. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the ~~Switch~~ apparatus is further configured to use the RX_ID value of trapped write commands to specify the amount of buffer space larger than needed for the write command and use the additional buffer space for subsequent write commands so that the ~~Switch~~ apparatus need not wait for a Transfer Ready command to transfer data related to the subsequent write command.

19. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the ~~Switch~~ apparatus is further configured to, in the event the ~~Switch~~ apparatus does not have sufficient buffer space for the write command, to either:

- (i) generate a busy status signal to the initiating Host;
- (ii) ~~placing~~ place the write command on a pending wait list; or
- (iii) ~~forwarding~~ forward the write command to the target.

20. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
a first SAN including the apparatus ~~Switch~~;
a second SAN ~~including a second Switch~~; and
an inter-SAN network connecting the first SAN and the second SAN.

21-23. (Canceled)

24. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:
receiving a write command at a switch, the write command specifying a host identifier corresponding to a host and a target identifier corresponding to a target, the write command including an originator exchange identifier (OX_ID) value and an uninitialized receiver exchange identifier (RX_ID) value;
~~forwarding the write command to the target;~~

initializing the receiver exchange identifier (RX_ID) value to generate an initialized RX_ID value;

sending a transfer ready command including the initialized RX_ID value to the host prior to receiving ~~the a~~ transfer ready command from the target, wherein sending the transfer ready command to the host allows the switch to operate as a proxy for the target;

modifying the originator exchange identifier (OX_ID) of the write command to include the initialized RX_ID value to generate a modified write command; and

forwarding the modified write command to the target.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, further comprising configuring the switch to forward data frames associated with the write command received in response to the transfer Ready command to the target.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 25, wherein a second switch between the switch and the target receives data frames associated with the write command and buffers the data frames until a transfer ready command ~~having an initialized RX_ID value~~ is received from the target.

27. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:

means for receiving a write command at a switch, the write command specifying a host identifier corresponding to a host and a target identifier corresponding to a target, the write command including an originator exchange identifier (OX_ID) value and an uninitialized receiver exchange identifier (RX_ID) value;

~~means for forwarding the write command to the target;~~

means for initializing the receiver exchange identifier (RX_ID) value to generate an initialized RX_ID value;

means for sending a transfer ready command including the initialized RX_ID value to the host prior to receiving ~~the a~~ transfer ready command from the target, wherein sending the transfer ready command to the host allows the switch to operate as a proxy for the target;

means for modifying the originator exchange identifier (OX_ID) of the write command to include the initialized RX_ID value to generate a modified write command; and

means for forwarding the modified write command to the target.

Please **ADD** new claims as follows:

28. (New) The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the apparatus is further configured to determine from the write command an amount of data to be written to the target, to ascertain whether it has sufficient storage space to buffer the amount of data, and to send the transfer ready command frame to the initiating Host before receiving the transfer ready command from the target if the apparatus has determined that it has sufficient storage space to buffer the amount of data.

29. (New) A method comprising:

receiving a write command at a switch, the write command specifying a host identifier corresponding to a host and a target identifier corresponding to a target, the write command including an originator exchange identifier (OX_ID) value and an uninitialized receiver exchange identifier (RX_ID) value;

forwarding the write command to the target;

initializing the receiver exchange identifier (RX_ID) value to generate an initialized RX_ID value; and

sending a transfer ready command including the initialized RX_ID value to the host prior to receiving a transfer ready command from the target, wherein sending the transfer ready command to the host allows the switch to operate as a proxy for the target.

30. (New) An apparatus, comprising:

a processor; and

a memory, at least one of the processor or the memory being for:

receiving a write command at a switch, the write command specifying a host identifier corresponding to a host and a target identifier corresponding to a target, the write command including an originator exchange identifier (OX_ID) value and an uninitialized receiver exchange identifier (RX_ID) value;

forwarding the write command to the target;

initializing the receiver exchange identifier (RX_ID) value to generate an initialized RX_ID value; and

sending a transfer ready command including the initialized RX_ID value to the host prior to receiving a transfer ready command from the target, wherein sending the transfer ready command to the host allows the switch to operate as a proxy for the target.

31. (New) The apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein the trapping mechanism is configured to trap the write command frame if the write command frame designates a predetermined Host_ID and a predetermined target_ID.